

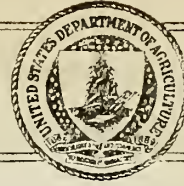
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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE Office of Information Press Service



WASHINGTON, D. C.

RELEASE FOR PUBLICATION
MAY 6, 1936 (WEDNESDAY)

THE MARKET BASKET

by

Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture

CHOOSING MEATS

The late spring is reflected in the meat markets. Spring lamb and veal, usually in season by this time, are only just arriving. But the meat supply as a whole will be greater than last year, say countrywide reports to the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

It is true the markets provide almost any kind of meat any time of year, thanks to modern methods of breeding and feeding the livestock, of processing, storing and transporting the meat. But the very considerable quantities of lambs and calves that come from the farms are a spring event and afford the housekeeper a wider choice of meats at this season than usual at other times of year.

Choosing the meat for dinner is a matter of considerable family importance. Meat is usually the center of the meal plan--often the more expensive part--and is likely to influence the verdict on the whole meal. Yet, from the standpoint of food value, says the Bureau of Home Economics of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, one kind of muscle meat is as nutritious as another, given corresponding proportions of lean, fat, and bone. Cheap cuts are as nutritious as the most expensive. Liver, kidney, brains, and heart are higher in some food values than muscle meat, but are specialties for occasions rather than for every day.

In other words, from the standpoint of good diet, generally speaking, meat of any kind is meat -- a protein food. But when it comes to planning a meal, meat is lamb, veal, beef or pork, fresh or cured and served as roasts, chops, steaks, stews, patties, sausage, or in a dozen other ways. We choose the meat for dinner according to what we like and according to the cost.

Spring lamb is one of the delicacies of this day and time. It was not much used in this country until about fifty years ago. Mutton there was, though not very popular. And as sheep were raised for wool, rather than for mutton, the lambs were allowed to grow. But spring lamb is another thing. Fed on their mothers' milk supplemented with pasture, these lambs are usually marketed when they are only 3 to 5 months old. They will be on the market from now on, coming earliest from California and Arizona, then from Texas, Tennessee and the southern regions, and from everywhere by June.

Meantime, the "fed" lambs have come and there still are some on the market. They are lambs that were shipped some 4 to 6 months ago from the ranges where they were born, mostly in Colorado, Wyoming, Montana and Idaho, to be fed through the winter somewhere in Colorado or in the corn belt until marketed. Another crop, born this spring, will be turned out on pasture until fall, to come on the market in the early winter.

Leg of lamb is fine meat and from the loin also are cut tender roasts, as well as chops. The "rack", or rib, furnishes chops and roasts, including the crown roast. The shoulder is cut into roasts and chops, and into smaller pieces for stews and patties. The breast may be stuffed and roasted, or made into a stew.

In veal and beef there are more variations than many a housekeeper suspects. Dairy farms market calves when they are 3 to 10 weeks old and these so-called "vealers", or milk-fed calves, are nearly all under 12 weeks old. Older calves furnish the rest of the calf meat on the market -- all sold as veal, though the age of the calf makes a difference in the meat. Government graded meat from the older calves is labeled "Calf", the very young only is labeled "Veal".

Then there is "baby beef", which is meat from animals especially fed to bring them to maturity earlier than usual -- at 15 months or less. "Baby beef" should of course be tender meat because the animal is so young. It makes the small roasts that find a special market in these days of small apartment kitchens with small ovens.

Steer beef and heifer beef are the two best classes from full grown cattle. There is a great variety of cuts, differing not only in tenderness but in proportions of lean, fat, and bone. Classed as the tender roasts are rib and loin. The tender steaks are sirloin, porterhouse, tenderloin, club, and rib (short cut). Less tender roasts are chuck ribs, cross arm, clod, round and rump. Less tender steaks are chuck, shoulder, flank, round, and rump. Stew meat is neck, plate and brisket, flank, shank, heel of round. The choice of cut should always be made with reference to the cooking method that will be used.

Pork is one of the tender meats because the animal is marketed when young -- usually when less than a year old. The meat varies in fatness all the way from "fat back" to the lean ham, loin, and tenderloin. Because so much pork is cured -- as ham, bacon, shoulder, shoulder butt, sausage, pickled pigs' feet, and so on -- the variety of cuts and the uses of pork are wider than those of lamb or veal.

All meat from packing houses or other meat establishments doing interstate or foreign business is subject to inspection under Federal law to determine its wholesomeness. In amount, that means about two thirds of the total meat supply on the market in the United States. This meat ^{is} examined by trained inspectors from the Bureau of Animal Industry of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, and if found wholesome and safe for the public to eat, the meat is stamped, branded, or otherwise labeled "U.S. Inspected and Passed", or those words abbreviated. Meat not covered by this Federal law is not inspected unless there are state or local regulations so requiring.

Besides the Federal inspection to determine the wholesomeness of meat, which is compulsory, when interstate or foreign shipment is involved, the Government provides a meat-grading service which is available to producers, shippers, or dealers, but is not compulsory. This service is performed by expert meat graders from the Bureau of Agricultural Economics of the U. S. Department of Agriculture. The carcass of the meat animal after grading is stamped to show the quality of the meat on that date, and the stamp is repeated in a continuous line of purple from end to end of each half or quarter. Such stamping is visible to the customer in the retail store on practically every cut on display.

The Government grades for meat are based upon three characteristics: "Conformation" of the carcass, its build or shape, which indicates to the meat grader, among other things, the proportion of meat and bone, and also the proportion of desirable cuts; "Finish", which refers to the thickness, color, character, and general distribution of fat; and "quality", meaning primarily the thickness, firmness and other qualities of both muscle fiber and the connective tissue, but involving also the character of the juices and the marbling, or fatty distribution.

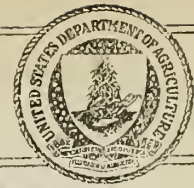
The grades as determined on the basis of these characteristics are called, in beef, for example: "U. S. Prime or No. 1"; "U. S. Choice, or No. 1"; U. S. Good, or No. 2; "U. S. Medium, or No. 3"; U. S. Common, or No. 4"; "U. S. Cutter, or No. 5"; "U. S. Low Cutter, or No. 6". Similar grades are established for lamb and veal.

As a matter of fact, the quantity of "U. S. Prime, or 1" beef on the market is very small, and goes chiefly to the big cities for specialty stores. There is considerably more of the second, or "Choice" grade, and much more of the third or "Good" grade, but the largest quantity -- more than half the total supply -- is "Medium", or No. 3 Grade, which is fourth from the top.

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THE MARKET BASKET

by

Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture

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CHOOSING FROM THE SPRING VEGETABLE MARKET

The "early" producing states, despite hard rains and cold weather in many places, are shipping more vegetables so far this season than last. New potatoes -- from Florida, Texas, Alabama, Louisiana, and California -- are coming northward at the rate of about a thousand carloads a week, which is much more than last year at this time. New cabbage, too, is rolling in -- and new onions, spinach, and green peas. All these are moving to market in quantities greater than were shipped at this time last spring. Snap beans and limas are coming more slowly, as a result of weather conditions in the Everglades of Florida.

Of spinach, more carloads have been shipped already than during the whole of last season, chiefly from Texas and the Norfolk Section. And the asparagus season is not over, although California shipments have fallen off. The Carolinas are shipping and the asparagus beds of Virginia, Maryland, and New Jersey are supplying truck shipments to nearby markets. In fact, much of the eastern coast, as far north as New York, is already eating "home-grown" asparagus.

Such is the news from market specialists of the U. S. Department of Agriculture. Plenty of spring vegetables and all the usual variety. And variety is important, says the Bureau of Home Economics. Vegetables are an important part of a good

diet, as well as of a good dinner. How good a diet and how good a dinner depends very largely on the variety of vegetables at hand from which to choose.

To begin with the great American standby, potatoes, we have them both "old" and "new", though not so many as usual, despite the larger shipments so far of new crop potatoes. The reason for this is unexpected shortage of old potatoes, due not to any shortage of the crop last year but to the extreme cold winter in some of the potato states, particularly Michigan, where hundreds of cars of potatoes spoiled in storage from rot and frost damage. This loss sent the price of old potatoes up this spring -- nearly 100 percent in 6 weeks -- and now that the new crop is coming on the market, it affects the price of new potatoes too. But probably not for long. As the season advances, the price is likely to go down.

"New" potatoes are of course the first crop of the season, and usually are dug and marketed before they are mature, while the skins are thin and feathery and can be scraped off, and while the flesh is waxy. The "early" varieties are chiefly "Irish Cobbler", "Bliss", "Triumph", and "Spaulding Rose." The very small new potato "marbles", which are such a treat served with young green peas, are more often to be had from the home garden than the market, perhaps, though when available they are much cheaper than the regular size potatoes. The housekeeper is the best customer for new potatoes. Hotels are more likely to buy the old ones.

"New" cabbage, too, is both early and different from the crop grown later on for winter. It has dark green curling leaves which cluster loosely in a head which is often pointed, and is green all through. That green color means more vitamin A, more calcium and iron than the hard white winter cabbage head contains. The cabbage grower plants for his early crop such quick-growing varieties as the Charleston Wakefield, Early York or Winningstadt and the Jersey Wakefield, the pointed cabbages. Or the round Copenhagen, the Flat Dutch, Succession and Glory of Enkhuizen. "New" cabbage is not of the kinds that can be stored for very long periods. It is definitely a spring and early summer vegetable.

The early onion crop is for the most part Bermudas and Creoles, which come chiefly from Texas, California, and Louisiana. So far this spring the shipments have come almost entirely from Texas, but there are big acreages of onions in the Coachella Valley of California that will be coming along very soon. Like the early cabbages and potatoes, Bermuda onions do not store well, and spring and early summer are their season. Other varieties come along later to store for fall and winter use.

Most of the snap beans and limas so far on the market this spring are from Florida. The peas are now coming from California and Mississippi, though Florida has also shipped heavily. Spinach is coming from the Norfolk region of Virginia, from Texas, and shipments are beginning from the truck gardens of Arkansas and Oklahoma. Nearly 7,000 carloads have been shipped so far this year, as compared with less than 5,000 at this same time last spring. Which seems to show, whatever the joke about it, that a good many people eat spinach and like it. Our domestic-grown tomatoes so far come chiefly from the east coast of Florida, and amount to only a little more than half the quantity sent to market by this time last year. Shipments so far from Cuba and Mexico have been heavy, however, and about equal to last year's shipments to this date. The planted acreage promises a record crop of tomatoes this year, once they really begin to come.

Young beets from Texas, young carrots from Arizona, California and Texas, greens of all kinds from California, Georgia, Louisiana and Virginia, with lettuce and romaine as usual, add to the array of spring vegetables from which to choose. And this is the beginning of the season. The truck gardens just to the north of the "early" states will soon be sending their crops to supply the markets until the more northerly gardens come along.

Tempting as they are, however, the spring vegetables should be chosen not haphazard, but by a pattern which will provide the necessary combination of

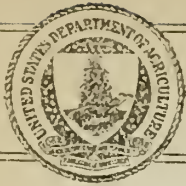
food values for a good diet, says the Bureau of Home Economics. For this purpose, vegetables may be classified in several different ways. Some of them are starchy and some are not. The starchiest of all are potatoes, sweetpotatoes, corn and the dried beans and peas. Among the least starchy are the greens, asparagus, broccoli, cabbage, eggplant, and tomatoes. Next come green beans and peas, beets, carrots, onions, okra, turnips, and others.

Some vegetables--particularly the greens--are important for their mineral values, and the greener the leaves the better they are as sources of calcium and iron.

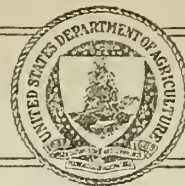
When it comes to vitamin values, we can choose vegetables partly by color. The green leaves, again, and the yellow-fleshed vegetables--carrots, sweetpotatoes, yellow corn, yellow turnips--furnish vitamin A. These and other vegetables furnish vitamin C, tomatoes most of all. And nearly all vegetables furnish vitamin B, many of them vitamin G also.

With spring markets attractive as they are, it is not difficult to choose vegetables for dinner by the best rules of diet as well as to please the fussiest member of the family. A good diet pattern calls for a starchy vegetable--and there we have new potatoes; a green leafy vegetable or a yellow or some other succulent one--and here are all the greens, or new cabbage, or young carrots, or tomatoes; and then one other vegetable (or more), to come from such a list as green beans, green peas, young beets, onions, and asparagus. And isn't that a pretty plate to set before a king?

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WASHINGTON, D. C.

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MAY 20, 1936 (WEDNESDAY)

THE MARKET BASKET

by

Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture

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AMONG THE FRUITS

The strawberry season comes earlier than it used to, and brings better berries to market. Most city people have noticed that, and may wonder why. One reason is that the business of strawberry growing has expanded in the last 10 years chiefly in the early producing states. At the same time horticulturists have been at work producing new varieties of strawberries, with special characteristics suited to the different regions and different growing seasons. The U. S. Department of Agriculture has developed seven new varieties in recent years, and hopes still further to improve flavor, firmness and shipping quality, to obtain late varieties in the North, better canning and preserving varieties for the commercial growers, and disease-resistant varieties everywhere.

Another reason for better berries on the market is that the commercial growers are more interested now in grading their product for shipment, so that only the best of it shall go to market. Packing and shipping methods have improved, too, with the result that the berries keep better in transit, and the customer gets a better product for her money.

All this was particularly true of the early strawberries this year. We have been getting them ever since December from Florida. A few weeks later ship-

ments began from Louisiana, the biggest strawberry state of all, which had an unusually fine crop this spring. Now North Carolina is shipping, and so are Tennessee, the Eastern Shore of Maryland, and Virginia. After that, from the East Coast to the Rockies, and then on to the Pacific Coast, we will have home-grown strawberries until midsummer.

The same things true of strawberries may be said of other fruit crops and fruit seasons -- new varieties, better handling, better grading, and better shipping methods, earlier and longer seasons, and better fruit on the markets.

And our choice of fruits right now is by no means limited to strawberries. Cantaloups are already coming to town, with a few early cherries, and a new crop of oranges. Watermelons, late this year, should come now any day. We are still getting grapefruit from Florida, and as the Florida shipments fall off, Puerto Rico and Cuba will come along with theirs, until Texas and Florida are back in the market next fall. It is too early now for raspberries and blackberries and dewberries, but they are not far off, with peaches and more melons soon to follow. There are fresh pineapples from Puerto Rico and the Isle of Pines, and there are always bananas from Central America.

Such are the offerings of the spring fruit market. They are especially worth considering, says the Bureau of Home Economics of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, because they are so valuable and so convenient when it comes to planning meals. Fruits are important for their food values, they are delicious, they furnish variety and color for the menu and for the table, and usually they are better uncooked than cooked. They are in place in any part of any meal, from the breakfast fruit or marmalade through luncheon or dinner salad, dessert, or beverage, and they are sometimes served with meat or vegetables.

The chief food value of most fruits is their vitamin content, especially their vitamin C and vitamin A. One reason fruits are valuable for their vitamin C is the fact that they are so often used fresh and uncooked, before they have a chance to lose this vitamin, which is destroyed by cooking. Oranges, lemons, grapefruit, tangerines and limes -- the citrus fruits -- are the richest of all sources of vitamin C. Tomatoes (botanically a fruit) come next. But strawberries, too, and gooseberries, raspberries and cantaloups are excellent sources of vitamin C, while cherries, pineapple, bananas, peaches, apples and watermelon count as good sources. Yellow fruits -- apricots and yellow peaches especially -- are rich in vitamin A. Cherries, cantaloups, blackberries, and bananas also furnish vitamin A, though in smaller amounts.

Strawberries, however, are the spring fruit par excellence. They are the only kind of berries cultivated so widely, and have come to represent a value to the producers of 23 to 42 million dollars annually in recent years.

Farm boys and girls know the wild strawberry that grows in the fields and woods and along the roadsides all ~~thru~~ through the eastern half of the United States. Along the Pacific Coast, from Alaska to California, on the mountains of Hawaii, and along the coast of Chile, grows a beach strawberry. These two wild species, taken to Europe and crossed long ago, are the ancestors of the cultivated strawberries now on the market in this country in some 30 major varieties.

The first commercial plantings, about 1800, centered naturally around the four largest markets -- Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore. Gradually strawberry culture spread southward and westward, reaching Virginia after the Civil War. By this time all the eastern and central states were growing strawberries, for home use and for market. Not until the 'seventies, 'eighties and 'nineties, however, with the extension of railroad facilities and refrigeration, could the Southern States, with their warmer climates and their distance from big markets, make strawberry-growing profitable as an industry. Now these are the principal commercial strawberry-growing regions. Florida strawberries can be delivered in New York, Boston, or Chicago, in fine condition for the table, in mid-winter. A little later, as the spring advances, come Louisiana and the "second early", and then the home-grown crops.

For shipment, the berries must, of course, be good to begin with, carefully picked, and carefully packed in small boxes which are held firmly in crates. The crates in turn must be held firmly in place in the car or truck, with air spaces between and around them. A freight car holds about 440 crates containing 24 quarts, or 229 crates of 36 quarts each. Preferably, the berries are precooled for shipment--so they are cold when they start. Bunkers of ice at each end of the freight car cool the air which circulates about the crates throughout the journey to market. In trucks, the berries are often kept cool by dry ice on top or between the crates. Louisiana berries are shipped by express, and may be delivered in Chicago or Cleveland, sometimes Pittsburgh, on the second morning after shipping; in New York on the third morning, and Boston on the fourth. Freight, of course, is slower. In the stores, in warm air, strawberries get soft quickly, any mold spreads rapidly through the box, and the dealer must get rid of his stock promptly. The customer, of course, wants berries in good condition, plump, perfect and of good flavor.

Of the strawberries developed by the U. S. Department of Agriculture, the Blakemore, a tart berry, good for the general market and for preserving, has rapidly taken the place of some of the older varieties in the South. The Southland is a new high-quality variety for home gardens in the South. For Oregon and Washington, the Redheart has been developed as a good variety for canning and for freezing, the Narcissa for general market and home garden purposes. The Bcllmar is offered as an improved general-market variety for Maryland and New Jersey. For the region from Maryland northward to Southern New England, and west to Kansas and Nebraska, the Dorsett and the Fairfax are now high-quality varieties both for market and home gardens.

New varieties of raspberries, blackberries, and gooseberries, as well as strawberries, are being introduced by the U. S. Department of Agriculture for new regions and different purposes.

The first cantaloups come from the Imperial Valley of California--then they come from Arizona, South Carolina, Georgia and Texas. Watermelons come first from Florida, Texas, California, then Georgia and South Carolina. Along in July will come the peak of the melon season over the country. California, then Oregon and Washington, furnish the earliest cherries. Soon, however, when it comes to choosing fruit, there will be embarrassment of riches.



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Office of Information
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WASHINGTON, D. C.

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THE MARKET BASKET

by

Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture

THE WELL-PLANNED MEAL

As the garden season advances northward and fresh vegetables and fruits become more plentiful, meals get better and better, and in general cheaper. Meat prices may not vary so much with the season -- but the vegetable items in the grocery bill need not run into such figures now as in midwinter. In fact, some of the winter luxuries will soon come on the table almost as a matter of course.

It is always possible, however, says the Bureau of Home Economics of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, to have meals of equal food value at very different levels of cost. No one menu can be proposed as the cheapest in all localities at any one time, of course -- prices vary too much from place to place for that. But with due consideration of the family preferences, as well as food value and variety in flavor, texture and color, the low-cost meal, well-planned, can be as attractive as the expensive one, especially in the spring and summer.

Compare these menus, for example: For a top-of-the season meal, chosen today without reference to cost, in almost any large market, even as far north as Boston or St. Paul--(1) Roast leg of veal, with baked stuffed Bermuda onions, buttered new potatoes and peas, a mixed green salad with radishes and Roquefort dressing, strawberry shortcake with whipped cream. Or (2), taking another spring

meat delicacy, have roast duckling with plain or apricot stuffing, creamed new potatoes, buttered asparagus, a salad of shredded new cabbage and raw carrots, with young onions and tart mayonnaise, fresh pineapple and sponge cake for dessert. The cost of such meals would vary, generally speaking with the progress of spring from south to north--in other words, with the distance from garden to market or the stage of the local gardens.

But some other combination of foods might be cheaper than either of these menus. For a low-cost meal of corresponding food value, choose a cheaper cut of meat, the cheaper vegetables of each type, the cheaper fruit, and omit expensive dressings or "frills". This can be done without sacrificing either food value or the desirable contrasts in flavor, texture, and color.

For a seasonable low-cost menu begin with a tomato juice cocktail--which is in place any time of year. Make it from the juice strained from a can of tomatoes and seasoned as desired; for meat, a stuffed shoulder of veal instead of the leg, browned potatoes, shredded new cabbage quick-cooked in milk, or, if preferred, spring greens quick-cooked and seasoned with crisp salt pork or bits of bacon. For dessert a rhubarb pie. With generous portions of each dish, and hot biscuits or corn bread, this is a good square meal, well-balanced, and well-planned. It is simpler than the more expensive menus, but it matches them in food essentials.

And this menu costs less because, instead of a veal roast from the leg, rump, loin or rib, we use a cut from the forequarters--the cheaper cuts of veal and beef come from this part of the animal. Potatoes, old or new, remain in the low-cost menu, for there is no other vegetable in their class except sweetpotatoes, which are not at the top of their season now. New peas, however, may cost more than new cabbage, or than mustard or dandelion or turnip greens. So we substitute the cheapest of the fresh spring leafy vegetables for the peas. Having a

third vegetable would improve this menu--baked onions, buttered beets or carrots, for example--but two well-chosen vegetables are enough, especially when you serve tomato juice. No salad is needed, since we have cabbage or spring greens. And rhubarb pie is a spring dessert which is both substantial and inexpensive.

In all three of these menus, be it noted, we follow the pattern for a well-balanced diet, which calls for (1) milk or cheese; (2) vegetables and fruits; (3) meat, fish, poultry or eggs; (4) breadstuffs or cereals; (5) fats and sugars.

A well-planned meal does more, however, than satisfy nutritional requirements. It provides variety in texture, flavor and color, so the foods will taste and look different from each other, and make an attractive combination. Usually meat is so different from anything else that it makes a center around which to plan. Any vegetable or fruit looks good and tastes good with meat. But a white vegetable like potatoes needs a contrasting neighbor on the plate--such as green peas, green cabbage, yellow carrots, or red beets. With the bland taste of potatoes and peas, and their soft texture, something flavorful like onions, and something crisp is needed--like a green salad, or radishes, or raw carrot sticks, or raw shredded cabbage. Also, a starchy dish should be offset by a vegetable or fruit that is succulent. Some textures and colors, as well as flavors, are produced by the cooking method, so to get variety we often serve one creamed dish, one fried vegetable, one that is boiled and buttered, or baked.

Some of the don'ts for meal-planners are these: Don't serve rice and potatoes at the same meal because both are starchy. For the same reason don't serve macaroni, or spaghetti, or noodles with rice or potatoes. Don't serve two similar vegetables at the same meal--potatoes and sweetpotatoes, for example; or two meats, unless you are providing a contrast of some kind--as in the case of baked chicken and sliced cured ham, a platter of cold cuts of meat, or liver and bacon. Don't serve two creamed dishes--it is easy to overwork white sauce. In short, don't duplicate. The essentials of a well-planned meal are balanced food values and variety of flavors, textures, and colors.

